

SAFETY FIRST

A Local Viewpoint

BY DAVID FRICK GENERAL MANAGER

“Safety brings first aid to the uninjured.”
— F.S. Hughes

Safety is the first thing we speak of at every board meeting. This is the methodology that makes me proud to be a part of Morgan County Rural Electric Association. Safety needs to be spoken of first because it matters the most and that’s the approach of the leadership we have at this association. Organizational safety can only be successful if individuals want it, too. When something bad happens, it’s the usual shortcut or disregard of using safety procedures that seem to be the root cause of most of the incidents we’ve seen at our co-op.

“For safety is not a gadget but a state of mind.”
— Eleanor Everet

How do we get to the point of not having any incidents? We are working hard at finding that answer and it will be a collaborative effort from many of our employees at MCREA. Ever since I can remember, we had a joint health and safety committee here at MCREA. Early on in my career I was part of that committee. We met once a quarter (four times a year) to read through accidents that had happened over a three-month period. Little discussion ever occurred and I often wondered what the purpose of the committee was. What are we trying to accomplish?

Let’s fast forward to the last five years. We have seen huge strides in the collaborative effort of our employees. We now meet monthly and have a full agenda of issues and items to discuss. We have at least one employee from every department attend the committee meeting — some departments have as many as five employees attending. Currently, a total of 15 employees make up this committee and all employees are welcome to attend or join on a full-time basis.

The mix of the committee is really what makes it successful. Many of the discussions are centered on the most dangerous parts of our job, usually our linemen and their procedures. It is refreshing and enlightening to have office personnel give valid and thoughtful insight into these subject matters. They are

looking at things from a different view and, in many instances, helpful suggestions are made and utilized. Many subjects are tabled and will be addressed at future meetings in order to have better thought and research done. The committee is diligent about not rushing any procedures that we may adopt.

I want to say thanks to all the committee members for working so hard on improving our safety program. We have a great chairman, Rob Baranowski, GIS specialist, leading the group and Joe Graves, apprentice lineman, acting as our vice chair. Both have brought a lot of leadership and enthusiasm to the group.

Do we have some work in front of us? Yes. Can we make MCREA a safer workplace? Yes. I know that this is what the members of the committee are dedicated to accomplishing.

The commitment of our board of directors and the hard work of our employees when it comes to safety will definitely make a difference now and in the future. From the days of just reading through some reports to actually coming up with real solutions will make a monumental difference in our safety culture.

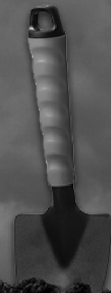


DAVID FRICK

WHAT LURKS UNDER THE DIRT?

Before beautifying your yard, **don't just dig** in. Call **811** or your state's utility locating service before you dig.

An underground utility is **damaged every nine minutes** because someone didn't call before digging.





STORY BEHIND THE SWITCH

MCREA Takes Story Behind the Switch to Weldona

Morgan County REA, along with Tri-State Generation and Transmission, shared the electricity education program, Story Behind the Switch, with grades K-9 in Weldona in February. Michelle Pastor (right), with Tri-State Generation and Transmission, is shown here with students learning where electricity comes from and the path it takes to get into your home and light switch.

National Lineworker Appreciation Day

Every year, we take a day to thank our lineworkers who are dedicated to keeping the lights on in our homes, farms and businesses. Morgan County Rural Electric Association's lineworkers maintain nearly 2,900 miles of line and more than 8,700 meters in MCREA's service territory.

We depend on our entire staff to keep Morgan County REA running smoothly, but on April 13, we honor our lineworkers who can find themselves in dangerous and challenging situations so our lives may be a little bit brighter and safer every day.

MCREA's linemen repair damaged lines and maintain critical infrastructure for our consumer-members and communities. Without their hard work and commitment to the job, our co-op would not thrive. No matter the time — day or night, weekday or weekend — if the lights go out, so do they. (Kati Huber, acct #xxx4200)

Perhaps you have seen them raising their bucket trucks in howling winds



and torrential rains, or in freezing, icy conditions. They work around the clock near high-voltage power lines until electricity is restored to every member in our co-op community.

In addition to aiding members in our local service territory, lineworkers are always willing and eager to volunteer when

a neighboring community, county or state is in need after a major outage occurs.

We hope you will join us in thanking the many lineworkers — both at MCREA and around the country — on April 13. Please use #ThankALineman on social media to show your support.

MCREA Talks Co-op Careers in February

◀ Morgan County REA had the pleasure of participating in the Morgan County Career Fair sponsored by the Work Force Center in February. Here you see Apprentice Lineman Joe Graves (left); GIS Specialist Rob Baranowski (center); and Member Services Representative Bill Annan (right) sharing what it's like to work in different fields within the cooperative. We love being out in our community. (Robert and Karen Kelley, acct #xxx2500)



Youth Tour & Leadership Camp Delegates Selected

Each summer, Morgan County REA sends one area student to the National Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. The Youth Tour is an opportunity for high school students to learn about our government during a week of educational and fun events. Students from all over the United States, sponsored by their local rural electric cooperatives, converge to tour the exciting sites around the capital as well as meet with industry and government officials.

Mohamed Ibrahim from Wiggins High School was chosen to represent MCREA at the 2020 Youth Tour in June. Approximately 1,900 students attend the event annually.

Ibrahim's journey begins with a day in Denver, touring the Capitol, the Colorado Rural Electric Association and Tri-State Generation and Transmission. The following morning, students fly to Washington, D.C., where they spend six days visiting the White House, U.S. Capitol, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, national Holocaust Memorial, the Smithsonian and Arlington National Cemetery. Highlights of the Youth Tour also include visiting with Colorado's U.S. senators and representatives and getting to know other high school students from



Mohamed Ibrahim



Arek Wulf



Oscar Picciano

across the country.

Morgan County REA will also sponsor two youth representatives to attend the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs. Arek Wulf from Prairie High School and Oscar Picciano, who resides in the Stoneham area and attends Monte Vista Online Academy, were selected to represent Morgan County REA at the 2020 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp at Glen Eden Resort in July. Over 100 students from Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas and Oklahoma attend the camp each year.

Leadership Camp is designed to provide a better understanding of cooperatives, energy prices and legislative processes. Educationally, participants are stimulated by the challenge of running a simulated co-op. From the time they arrive, they are busy electing a board of directors, general

manager and several committees. All profits the co-op makes (from the concession stand) are redistributed to the members as "capital credits" at the end of camp.

Other activities at Leadership Camp include a volleyball tournament and barbecue, pool party, dance, gondola ride to Mount Werner and Steamboat Village, and tours of Trapper Mine and Craig power plant.

Students applied for the Youth Tour and Leadership Camp by filling out an application and completing an essay on a topic chosen from a list provided by MCREA. Finalists also went through an interview process.

Congratulations to Mohamed, Oscar and Arek, from everyone at Morgan County REA.

MCREA Welcomes New Employee



TRAVIS VARELMAN

Morgan County REA is pleased to welcome Travis Varelman as its new area serviceman.

Travis is no stranger to being a part of a cooperative family. Before joining us at MCREA, he worked at Tri-State Generation and Transmission and Y-W Electric Association. He chose to come to Morgan County REA because he wanted to be back in his hometown of Brush.

In addition to being a new area serviceman for MCREA, Travis and his wife, Katie, own a gym. Travis and Katie have four children to keep them busy when not in the gym or working.

Travis also enjoys all things Morgan County in his spare time, which includes hunting and fishing.

Please join us in welcoming Travis to the Morgan County REA family.

2020 MCREA Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to these nine outstanding young people who were selected to receive postsecondary college or vocational scholarships by the Morgan County REA scholarship committee:



Kathryn Schoemaker
Fort Morgan High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Bradley Miller
Fort Morgan High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



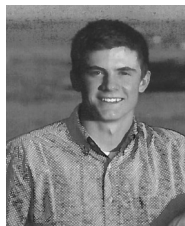
Amber Lauck
Fort Morgan High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Wyatt Patton
Briggsdale High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Andrew Littlefield
Prairie High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Walter Jordan
Colorado State University
\$1,000 MCREA Post-secondary
Scholarship



Allie Christensen
Fort Morgan High School
\$1,000 Basin Electric Scholarship



Alaina Endreson
Briggsdale High School
\$500 Tri-State Generation and
Transmission Scholarship



Lauren Fritzler
Merino High School
\$500 Tri-State Generation and
Transmission Scholarship



**WIN \$25
OFF YOUR
ELECTRIC BILL**

Each month Morgan County REA gives two lucky consumer-members a \$25 credit on their electric bill, just by reading *Colorado Country Life*.

Congratulations, Ted Wilson (account # xxx5403) and Edward Lutz (account # xxx0100), you saw your names and account numbers in the February edition of *Colorado Country Life*. You received a \$25 credit on your bill.

There are two more MCREA member names and their account numbers hidden somewhere in this issue. If you find your name and account number, call member services at 970-867-5688 by April 30 to claim a \$25 credit on your electric bill.